I CLAIM:

1. An electronic mail delivery method, comprising the steps of:

(a) creating an electronic mail, and setting parameters of the electronic mail, including address of an intended mail recipient, via a sending computer;

(b) establishing a connection between the sending computer and a mail-handling server, and transmitting the electronic mail and the parameters thereof from the sending computer to the mail-handling server;

(c) storing the electronic mail received from the sending computer in a location of the mail-handling server, and enabling the mail-handling server to transmit a mail alert message, which includes location information of the electronic mail in the mail-handling server, to the sending computer;

(d) enabling the sending computer to forward the mail alert message received from the mail-handling server to a receiving computer of the intended mail recipient; and

(e) upon receipt of the mail alert message, operating the receiving computer to establish a connection with the mail-handling server, and to download the electronic mail from the mail-handling server.

2. The electronic mail delivery method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of:

(f) enabling the mail-handling server to transmit a delivery complete message to the sending computer upon detection that the receiving computer has downloaded the electronic mail.

5   3. The electronic mail delivery method of Claim 1, wherein the parameters of the electronic mail set in step (a) further include a delivery time period, the method further comprising the step of:

(g) enabling the mail-handling server to cancel
10   delivery of the electronic mail to the intended mail recipient upon detection that the electronic mail has yet to be downloaded by the intended mail recipient after expiry of the delivery time period.

4. The electronic mail delivery method of Claim 1,
15   wherein the parameters of the electronic mail set in step (a) further include an optional self-destruct instruction, the method further comprising the step of:

(h) immediately after the receiving computer has downloaded the electronic mail, enabling the
20   mail-handling server to destroy a copy of the electronic mail stored therein upon detection that the self-destruct instruction was selected.

5. The electronic mail delivery method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of:

25   (b-1) prior to transmitting the electronic mail from the sending computer to the mail-handling server, enabling the mail-handling server to verify user of the

sending computer.

6. The electronic mail delivery method of Claim 5, wherein, in step (b-1), the mail-handling server receives an account number and a password from the sending computer to enable the mail-handling server to verify the user of the sending computer.

7. The electronic mail delivery method of Claim 6, wherein, in step (b-1), the mail-handling server guides the user of the sending computer through a registration procedure to generate the account number and the password for the user of the sending computer when the mail-handling server has failed to verify the user of the sending computer.

8. The electronic mail delivery method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of:

(b-2) prior to transmitting the electronic mail from the sending computer to the mail-handling server, operating the sending computer to encrypt the electronic mail using a validation proof obtained from the mail-handling server and issued by the mail-handling server to the intended mail recipient.

9. The electronic mail delivery method of Claim 8, wherein, in step (b-2), upon detection by the user of the sending computer that the intended mail recipient has yet to be issued with the validation proof,

operating the sending computer to issue a request to the mail-handling server for validating the intended

mail recipient,

enabling the mail-handling server to send validating software to the receiving computer of the intended mail recipient, and

enabling the receiving computer to send a public key, which is generated upon execution of the validating software, to the mail-handling server , thereby allowing the mail-handling server to generate the validation proof for the intended mail recipient that is subsequently transmitted to the sending computer.

10. The electronic mail delivery method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of:

(b-3) prior to transmitting the electronic mail from the sending computer to the mail-handling server, enabling the mail-handling server to charge mail handling fees from a monetary account of the user of the sending computer.

11. The electronic mail delivery method of Claim 1, wherein, in step (e), prior to enabling the receiving computer to download the electronic mail from the mail-handling server, the mail-handling server determines an operating platform used by the sending computer to create the electronic mail, detects whether the operating platform is resident in the receiving computer, and allows the receiving computer to download the operating platform when the operating platform is not resident in the receiving computer.

12. An electronic mail delivery system, comprising:

a sending computer adapted to be operated by a mail sender so as to create an electronic mail and to set parameters of the electronic mail, including address of an intended mail recipient;

a mail-handling server, wherein the sending computer is further operable so as to establish a connection with the mail-handling server and to transmit the electronic mail and the parameters thereof to the mail-handling server;

wherein the mail-handling server stores the electronic mail received from the sending computer in a location thereof, and transmits a mail alert message, which includes location information of the electronic mail in the mail-handling server, to the sending computer; and

a receiving computer adapted to be operated by the intended mail recipient, wherein the sending computer forwards the mail alert message received from the mail-handling server to the receiving computer;

wherein, upon receipt of the mail alert message, the receiving computer is operable so as to establish a connection with the mail-handling server, and to download the electronic mail from the mail-handling server.

13. The electronic mail delivery system of Claim 12, wherein the mail-handling server transmits a delivery

complete message to the sending computer upon detection that the receiving computer has downloaded the electronic mail.

14. The electronic mail delivery system of Claim 12, wherein the parameters of the electronic mail set by the sending computer further include a delivery time period, and wherein the mail-handling server cancels delivery of the electronic mail to the intended mail recipient upon detection that the electronic mail has yet to be downloaded by the receiving computer after expiry of the delivery time period.

15. The electronic mail delivery system of Claim 12, wherein the parameters of the electronic mail set by the sending computer further include an optional self-destruct instruction, and

wherein, immediately after the receiving computer has downloaded the electronic mail, the mail-handling server destroys a copy of the electronic mail stored therein upon detection that the self-destruct instruction was selected.

16. The electronic mail delivery system of Claim 12, wherein the mail-handling server verifies the mail sender prior to enabling transmission of the electronic mail from the sending computer to the mail-handling server.

17. The electronic mail delivery system of Claim 16, wherein the mail-handling server receives an account

number and a password from the sending computer to enable the mail-handling server to verify the mail sender.

18. The electronic mail delivery system of Claim 17, wherein the mail-handling server guides the mail sender through a registration procedure via the sending computer to generate the account number and the password for the mail sender when the mail-handling server has failed to verify the mail sender.

19. The electronic mail delivery system of Claim 12, wherein the sending computer is operable so as to encrypt the electronic mail using a validation proof obtained from the mail-handling server and issued by the mail-handling server to the intended mail recipient prior to transmitting the electronic mail from the sending computer to the mail-handling server.

20. The electronic mail delivery system of Claim 12, wherein the mail-handling server is configured to charge mail handling fees from a monetary account of the mail sender prior to enabling transmission of the electronic mail from the sending computer to the mail-handling server.